

Jan./Feb. 1987 \$1.50

# MONTANA OUTDOORS

Special  
Photo Issue





# MONTANA OUTDOORS

January/February 1987

Volume 18, Number 1

**Front Cover:** Alan G. Nelson  
(saw-whet owls)

**Inside Front Cover:** Kim Keating  
(bighorn sheep)

**Back Cover:** Conrad Rowe  
(bobcat)

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**Montana Outdoors**, (USPS 360 280), the official publication of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, is published bimonthly (January, March, May, July, September, and November). Contributions (manuscripts or illustrations) are welcome with the understanding that the department or the editor cannot be responsible for loss or damage. All contributions will be published at the discretion of the editor. For subscription information, phone 800/247-5470 (toll-free). Subscription rates are \$7 for one year, \$12.50 for two years, \$17 for three years. (Please add \$3 per year for Canadian subscriptions. All other foreign subscriptions, air mail only, are \$22 for one year.) Individual copies and back issues cost \$1.50 each, plus 25 cents for postage and handling. Although **Montana Outdoors** is copyrighted, permission to reprint articles is available by writing our office or phoning us at 406/444-2474. All correspondence should be addressed: **Montana Outdoors**, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 E. Sixth; Helena, MT 59620. ©Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1987. All rights reserved. Indexed by States' Periodical Index, 1660 Smithville Rd.; Havre, MT 59501.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: **Montana Outdoors**, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 E. Sixth; Helena, MT 59620. Second-class postage paid at Helena, MT 59620, and additional mailing offices.

Fifty years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a piece of paper that we might consider a "check." It's a check from which generations of wildlife lovers have drawn interest.

On Sept. 2, 1937, he signed the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, better known as the Pittman-Robertson (or P-R) Act after its principal sponsors, Sen. Key Pittman of Nevada and Rep. A. Willis Robertson of Virginia.

In the 1930s, the plundered forests, carelessly plowed grasslands, and commercial slaughter of wildlife were brought sharply into focus by the worst drought and worst economic Depression in America's history. The words accompanying the first half of this issue's pictures make vivid that bleak period in our nation's history. They come from Jay N. "Ding" Darling, a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for the Des Moines Register whose work was also nationally syndicated. His vociferous support of the Pittman-Robertson legislation was only one of his efforts toward improving the lot of wildlife: He was the first head of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, forerunner of today's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He also worked to establish the Iowa chapter of the Izaak Walton League and the Iowa Fish and Game Commission; he helped convince Congress to enact the Migratory Bird Hunting Act, and became the first president of the General Wildlife Federation (later the National Wildlife Federation).

His work and that of other conservationists of the time is still bearing fruit: Since 1937, the P-R program has distributed \$1.5 billion to the states for wildlife restoration. Many species of birds and animals are more numerous today than they were 50 years ago because of wildlife management and research made possible by P-R funds. Some of the impressive facts and figures about those accomplishments appear as the second half of this issue's text.

Simply put, without this landmark legislation, much of the wildness portrayed in this issue's photos would not exist. The fact that it *does* is an appropriate way to celebrate 50 years of Pittman-Robertson.

• Special thanks to:

**Diane Nugent**, Butte artist, for her pen-and-ink drawings;

**Amaury R. Perez**, archivist, National Wildlife Federation;

Washington, D.C.;

**Phil Agee**, federal aid division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;

Washington, D.C.;

**Ralph Schlenker**, treasurer, J.N. "Ding" Darling Foundation;

Des Moines, Iowa;

**David L. Lendt**, vice president for information, Iowa State University; Ames, Iowa.

**“Once upon a time, and that not so very long ago, there was discovered a continent so rich in the bounties of nature as to be beyond all belief. A description of the vast forests, the rivers and lakes teeming with fish, the very soil itself so lush that part of the country was called the breadbasket of the world, can be found in any history of early America. What of this paradise now?”—Jay N. Darling**

**“Our Natural Resources Can be Restored and Sustained.” *California Conservationist*, December 1938**



**Long-toed salamander: Jan L. Wassink  
Red-shafted flickers: Jan L. Wassink**





Rocky Mountain Front: Kristi DuBois

**“Perhaps when the time comes to write the history of our age it will be said of us that we built cages for ourselves and shut ourselves apart from the realities of nature. Our troubles came, our future critics may decide, because we forgot that our lives are sustained in the same way that the life of a dandelion or a field mouse is sustained, an eagle’s life or a deer’s life or the life of an oak or elm or salmon.”—Jay N. Darling**

**“Whose Outdoors? Yours and Mine—  
Or Our Children’s?”**

*National Parent-Teacher, August-September, 1938*



Alpine forget-me-nots (left) and Rocky Mountain douglasia: Kristi DuBois







**“Today’s children must absorb the truth about this land of theirs and acquire a jealous love for it. The process of safeguarding outdoor resources must become automatic, so that frantic appeals and preachments will no longer be necessary.”—Jay N. Darling**

**“Whose Outdoors? Yours and Mine—  
Or Our Children’s?”**

*National Parent-Teacher, August-September 1938*



**Sage grouse: Conrad Rowe  
Polyphemus moth: Jan L. Wassink**



Homestake Pass: George Wuerthner



Antelope: Mike Logan

**“ . . . Game has been the orphan child without asylum in the conservation world. No provision has been made for its permanent home. There has been no Government agency entrusted with its custodianship. It has subsisted on the crumbs dropped from the table of forestry, parks, reclamation and advancing civilization. That it has escaped total extinction is through no foresight or comprehensive plan . . . . ”—J.N. Darling**

confidential memorandum, for the President [Franklin D. Roosevelt] and the Secretary of Agriculture, not dated







Monarch butterfly: Al DeMangelaere  
Grinnell Lake, Glacier National Park: Diane Ensign

“ ‘If I could put together all the virgin landscapes which I knew in my youth and show what has happened to them in one generation it would be the best object lesson in conservation that could be printed,’ Darling claimed. He later wrote, ‘All it takes to be a conservationist is to have been awake and a witness to what has happened to all our continental forests, soils, waters, minerals and wildlife in the last fifty or seventy-five years and he’ll be a conservationist from fright! That’s me.’ ”



“Ding,” by David L. Lendt

“It might be as important for a child to know how fertile soil is formed and how plants turn minerals into human food as to remember the dates of battles and be able to name Presidents in order. Yet, even more important than knowledge of facts gained through books and teaching is the knowledge of his rightful heritage, wildlife, gained through intimate enjoyment of the living thing.

“This heritage means a lot. . . . It means top-soil and plants, trees and flowers, birds and beasts, fish and water plants that are needed by fish and by wildfowl—

“It means green fields instead of dust bowls—clear rivers instead of poisoned rivers—

“It means food and fun—beauty and happiness—health and strength for us and for millions who will come after us.”—Jay N. Darling

“Whose Outdoors? Yours and Mine—  
Or Our Children’s?”  
*National Parent-Teacher*, August-September  
1938



Osprey: Neal & Mary Jane Mishler



River otter: Jan L. Wassink  
Ear Mountain, Rocky Mountain Front: Kristi DuBois





Rising moon, Sweet Grass County: Mike Logan



Red foxes: Conrad Rowe



**“It’s an old saying that you never miss the water till the well runs dry, but it might be a good idea to look down the well once in a while and see how the water level is holding up.”—J.N. Darling**

*“Duck Ponds versus Deserts”*

*The Rotarian Magazine, October 1938*

**Point Creek, Big Horn County: Lee Graves**







Painted turtles: Jan L. Wassink  
Bison: Michael H. Francis

Moose (following page): Michael H. Francis



**"We have now come to the end of our frontiers. We must sit down where we are and live and eat, for how many thousand years is only a question of your ability to imagine."—J.N. Darling**

**"Ducks Ponds versus Deserts"  
*The Rotarian Magazine*, October 1938**







Castle Reef, Rocky Mountain Front: Tim Egan



Yellow pine chipmunk: Tom Ulrich





Ruffed grouse: Conrad Rowe

“ . . . Then a remarkable thing happened. With a handful of farsighted conservationists leading the way, organized sportsmen and the firearms and ammunition industries joined efforts with State wildlife agencies to meet the wildlife crisis with an ingenious long-range plan. At their urging, Congress extended the life of an existing 10 percent tax on ammunition and firearms used for sport hunting, but this time it earmarked the proceeds to be distributed to the States for wildlife restoration. Not just restocking, which had met with mediocre success at best, but other needed support systems as well—scientific research and habitat management to give animals a solid chance to re-establish healthy populations.

“The result was called the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, better known as the Pittman-Robertson Act. . . .”

“50 Years Restoring America's Wildlife 1937-1987”  
a publication of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish  
and Wildlife Service



**“The Pittman-Robertson Act directed that a manufacturers’ excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition be distributed to States for wildlife restoration projects. To date, this act has helped States to purchase more than four million acres of habitat for wildlife management areas and to carry out scientific wildlife management efforts on an additional 40 million acres of land.**

**“Pittman-Robertson, funded by sportsmen and women and the recreational shooting manufacturers, has made a lasting difference in conserving and enhancing America’s wildlife resources. . . .”**

**“Pittman-Robertson—The Continuing Legacy,” a publication of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**



**Bison Mountain, Glacier National Park: Joyce Clarke Turvey  
Mule deer: Michael H. Francis**







Red fox: Pete & Alice Bengeyfield



Newborn elk calf: Gary D. Holmes

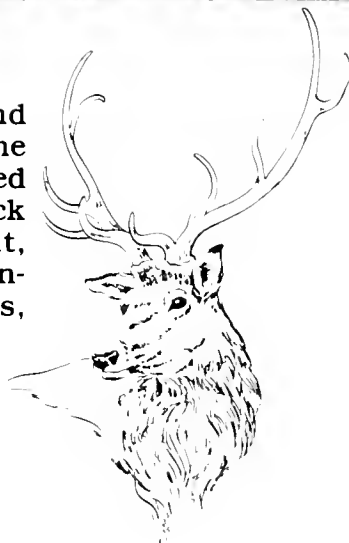


Elk: Conrad Rowe



**“Numerous species have rebuilt their populations and extended their ranges far beyond what they were in the 1930s. Among them are the wild turkey, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, wood duck, beaver, black bear, giant Canada goose, ring-necked pheasant, American elk, desert bighorn sheep, bobcat, barren-ground caribou, mountain lion, gray and fox squirrels, and several species of predatory birds. . . .”**

**“50 Years Restoring America’s Wildlife 1937-1987”  
a publication of the U.S. Department of the  
Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service**





National Bison Range: Jack Tuholske

**“ . . . Looking back over the nearly 50-year lifespan of this law, the argument can be made that Pittman-Robertson has been responsible for the restoration of more wildlife species than any other piece of legislation in the history of wildlife conservation.”**

“The Pittman-Robertson Program—50 Years of Success in Restoring America's Wildlife,” news release, Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service



Cabinet Mountains Wilderness: Peter Kagan



Mallard: John W. Warden



Grizzly bear: Conrad Rowe

**“Many Americans are surprised to learn that hunters have been the mainstay of wildlife conservation over the last half-century. . . . Long before such terms as ‘ecology’ and ‘environment’ entered our popular vocabulary, taxes on firearms and ammunition—willingly supported by hunters and the firearms industry—were rescuing wildlife species and their habitats that would otherwise have disappeared.”—Don Hodel, Secretary of the Interior**

**“The Pittman-Robertson Program—50 Years of Success in Restoring America’s Wildlife,” news release, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service**







**“From the viewpoint of the 1980s, it seems phenomenal that so many sportsmen and a price-sensitive industry would have chosen in times of economic hardship to submit to a heavy excise tax for benefits that would take years to realize. That their successors continue to support Pittman-Robertson enthusiastically (the tax is now generally 11 percent of the manufacturer’s/importer’s price and covers handguns and archery equipment as well) is a tribute to the program’s many achievements.”**

**“50 Years Restoring America’s Wildlife 1937-1987”  
a publication of the U.S. Department of the Interior,  
Fish and Wildlife Service**



**Absaroka Range: Tim Egan  
Golden eagle: Louis M. Kis**



Mission Mountains: Kent Krone



**“Because improved research and good habitat also help non-game animals, many creatures that are not hunted, such as bald eagles, sea otters, and various songbirds, have benefited under activities funded by ‘P-R,’ the commonly accepted nickname for the Pittman-Robertson Act.”**

**“50 Years Restoring America’s Wildlife 1937-1987”  
a publication of the U.S. Department of the Interior,  
Fish and Wildlife Service**



**Cedar waxwing: Jan L. Wassink**



Beartooth Range near the Montana-Wyoming border: Mike Logan

**“ . . . there can be no doubt that without a ‘P-R’ program the nation would have been poorer in terms of knowledge, science, and the confidence that we can indeed change things for the better. The abundant presence of wildlife among us clearly contributes to our pride and happiness as a people and a civilization. Its value in helping us understand the world we live in is beyond any calculation.”**

**“50 Years Restoring America’s Wildlife 1937-1987”  
a publication of the U.S. Department of the Interior,  
Fish and Wildlife Service**



Green-winged teal: Louis M. Kis



Pacific tree frog: Jan L. Wassink



Morning mist: Tom Nelson  
Eastern kingbird: Jan L. Wassink

**“The nation behaves well if it treats  
natural resources as assets which it  
must turn over to the next genera-  
tion—and not impaired in value. . . .”**

Theodore Roosevelt



